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Gibeon, the exploits of Samson, the narrow escapes of the son of Jesse, the miracles wrought by Elijah and Elisha, the story of Esther, of Jonah and of Daniel and his friends,—are all adapted to meet the natural craving of the young for the abnormal and supernatural. But they meet it with truth, and with truth intimately associated with moral and religious ideas, so that the effect is as wholesome as it is gratifying. Once more, the poetical portions of the Old Testament are indispensable, whether it be the didactic or gnomic utterances in the Book of Proverbs which sum up the wisdom of all ages and exhibit the insight and shrewdness of "Poor Richard" without his narrowness and sometimes questionable morality, or the Psalms of David, so sweet, so rich, so varied, so adapted to the nature of man as man always and everywhere. What injustice to a child can be greater than to cut him off from the study of compositions like these, the models of their kind? Instead of lessening the attention given to the Old Testament we ought to increase it, make it more intelligent and searching, and above all bring to view its manifold close and intimate relations to the New, so that the young shall see and feel that the two Testaments combine to make one whole, and that whole is the Word of God. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D.,  
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**The Hebrew Language.**—A knowledge of the Hebrew language is indispensable to the theologian.

1. It is necessary as a means for the genuine study of the Old Testament. There is perhaps no language of equal importance whose contents are more imperfectly reached by translations than the Hebrew.

2. It is likewise indispensable to the proper exegesis of the New Testament.

a) For the New Testament idiom largely rests on the Hebrew. It is a Hebraizing Greek. The *Aramaic*, which was probably the early domestic vernacular of our Lord, and of most of the New Testament writers, is closely cognate with the Hebrew, and through it as well as through the Old Testament writings and the Septuagint, which is a Hebraizing Greek, the New Testament receives its Semitic impress. The New Testament, therefore, to use Luther's expression, "is full of the Hebrew mode of speaking."

b) The citations from the Old Testament can only be properly understood after being compared with the original.

c) The New Testament itself is to some extent, we know not how largely, a translation of what was uttered in the Aramaic dialect. It is quite possible and indeed highly probable that both our Lord and his Apostles used both languages. That both languages were in general use, is universally admitted; the question, however, whether our Lord spoke for the most part in Greek, or in Hebrew (Aramaic), is not so definitely settled. Of our Lord himself it is expressly stated that on four occasions he made use of the Aramaic: When he raised the daughter of Jairus (Mark v., 41); when he opened the ears of the deaf man (Mark vii., 34); when upon the cross (Mark xv., 34); and when he manifested himself to Paul near Damascus (Acts xxvi., 14). We are also definitely informed that St. Paul on certain occasions spoke in the Hebrew language (Acts xxi., 40; xxii., 2).

The Hebrew language is also of especial value to the philologist, as it is a prominent member of the large family of languages known as the *Semitic*. The Semitic languages are indigenous to hither Asia, and confined to Palestine, Syria, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Arabia and Ethiopia.

The name Hebrew is usually derived from *Eber* or *Heber*, the ancestor of Abraham (Gen. x., 24, 25; xiv., 13). Hebrew was the language of the Jewish people during the time of their national independence, and, with some modification, down to the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70). It has continued to be their sacred language, and is used in the synagogue, more or less, to this day, and by a few of them, chiefly the older orthodox bodies in Germany and Austria, it is to some extent still written and spoken.

Everything seems to indicate that the Semitic people emigrated from a common centre in the desert on the south of Babylonia, the Arabic group separating first, next the Aramaic, then the Hebrew, while the Babylonian gained ultimately the mastery of the original Akkadian of Babylonia, and the Assyrian founded the great empire on the Tigris. The Book of Genesis (xi., 31) represents Abram as going forth from this central seat of Ur of the Chaldees, at first northward into Mesopotamia, and then emigrating to Canaan. The monuments of Ur reveal that about this time (B. C. 2000), it was the seat of a great literary development. Whether Abraham adopted the language of the Canaanites, or brought the Hebrew with him from the East, is unimportant, for the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian are nearer to the Hebrew and Phœnician than they are to the other Semitic families. Thus the Hebrew language, as a dialect of the Canaanites and closely related to the Babylonian, had already a considerable literary development prior to the entrance of Abram into the Holy Land\*. Jacob and his family carried the Hebrew language with them into Egypt, and their descendants preserved it as the medium of communication among themselves, and after their sojourn carried it back again to its original home in Canaan.

The Hebrew language remained substantially unmodified, either by accretion from other languages or by growth and development within itself, during the whole period of its literary period. Its literature may be properly divided into three periods:

1) The Mosaic writings. These contain archaic and poetic words and forms seldom found elsewhere.

2) The Davidic or Solomonic period, the golden Age, extending from Samuel to Hezekiah (B. C. 1100–700). Here belong the older prophetic and poetic writings and all the Davidic Psalms. This period includes the lives and writings of David, Solomon, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Jonah, Amos and Hosea.

3) The third period includes the interval between the Babylonian exile and the times of the Maccabees (B. C. 600–160). Its marked feature is the approximation of the Hebrew to the kindred Aramaic and Chaldee. This may be seen to a greater or less extent in Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Esther, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the later Psalms. Gradually the Aramaic or Chaldee superseded the Hebrew as the spoken language of the people. When the New Testament speaks of Hebrew as the then current language in Palestine, we must understand it to mean the Aramaic dialect.

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\* See an excellent presentation of this subject by Prof. Charles A. Briggs in his *Biblical Study*, pp. 46–50. Prof. Briggs also discusses some of the most prominent characteristics of the Hebrew language: 1) its simplicity and naturalness, 2) the striking correspondence of the language to the thought, 3) its majesty and sublimity, 4) its richness in synonyms (having 55 words for *destroy*, 60 for *break*, and 74 for *take*, etc.), 5) its life and fervor, etc.

The history of the critical study of the Hebrew begins with the Jewish grammarians and scribes, the Talmudists and Massoretes, who carefully collected all that pertains to the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Christian Fathers with the exception of Origen, Epiphanius, and especially Jerome, were ignorant of the Hebrew language, and derived their knowledge of the Old Testament from the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. During the Middle Ages, Hebrew was almost exclusively cultivated by learned Jews, especially in Spain during the Moorish rule, such as Aben Ezra (*d.* 1176), David Kimchi (*d.* 1235), and Moses Maimonides (*d.* 1204). After the revival of letters some Christians began to learn it from Jewish Rabbis, Reuchlin (*d.* 1522), the uncle of Melancthon, is the father of modern Hebrew learning in the Christian Church. The reformers cultivated and highly recommended the study of Hebrew, and the Protestant translations of the Bible were made directly from the original languages, and not from the Vulgate. Luther, the greatest master perhaps in the annals of the race as a translator, almost despaired at times of giving German equivalents for parts of the Old Testament. He speaks of the Book of Job and of the other parts of the Old Testament as if their writers were resolutely determined not to speak in German, and to the last year of his life, Luther labored in giving greater perfection to the whole translation. The characteristic difference between Luther's German version and the Authorized (and Revised) English version, is that the English more closely follows the words of the original, while Luther's reflects more perfectly the spirit and thought. The one is a splendid illustration of the mechanical, the other of the artistic. The English often reads like an interlinear translation, Luther's version almost constantly reads as if the translation were an original, as if the holy writers were speaking in German as their own vernacular. Luther's translation was at once the most spirited, the most dramatic, the most lucid ever given of the Old Testament, but when we see that even it fails very often to convey perfectly the exact sense of the Hebrew, we feel the importance of a thorough study of that language.

During the seventeenth century, Johann Buxtorf, the Elder (*d.* 1629), and his son, Johann Buxtorf, the Younger (*d.* 1664), both of Basel, Louis Cappel (*d.* 1658), of Saumur, and Salomon Glassius (*d.* 1656) of Jena were the most prominent Hebrew and Talmudic scholars. Johann David Michaelis (*d.* 1791), gave a great impetus to the study of the Oriental languages, especially through his *Oriental and Exegetical Library*, begun in 1771. In the present century, Wilhelm Gesenius, professor in Halle (1786-1842), and Heinrich Ewald, professor in Göttingen (1803-73), created a new epoch in the study of Hebrew. Rödiger, Hupfeld, Hitzig, Fuerst, Delitzsch, Böttcher, Olshausen and Bickell of Germany, Ginsburg, Cheyne, Davidson, Driver, Perowne and Davies of Great Britain, Moses Stuart, *d.* 1852), Edward Robinson, (*d.* 1863), Bush, Conant, Tayler Lewis, Green, and others of our country, deserve special mention as Hebrew scholars.

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